



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Virginia Employment Commission

Ellen Marie Hess
Commissioner

6606 West Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23230

Post Office Box 26441
Richmond, Virginia 23261-6441

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Contact: Benjamin Alpern, Economist
Economic Information & Analytics Division
(804) 486-2408 or (804) 786-8264

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The Virginia unemployment rate fell to 4.5 percent in May while total nonfarm payroll employment decreased by 3,500

—Changes in these measures since April 2020 primarily reflect the effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and efforts to contain it. —

RICHMOND— Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell 0.2 percentage points in May to 4.5 percent, which is 4.0 percentage points below the rate from a year ago. According to household survey data in May, the labor force increased by 4,042 to 4,229,852, as the number of unemployed residents decreased by 8,061. The number of employed residents increased by 12,103 to 4,040,585. Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate continues to be below the national rate, which decreased to 5.8 percent.

Virginia nonagricultural wage and salary employment, from the monthly establishment survey, decreased by 3,500 jobs in May to 3,888,500. April's preliminary estimate was revised downward by 2,300, taking away much of that month's job gains. In May, private sector employment increased by 100 jobs to 3,190,600, while public sector payrolls decreased by 3,600 to 697,900. Employment rose in four of the eleven major industry sectors and declined in seven. The largest job gain during May occurred in **education and health services** with an increase of 3,200 jobs to 534,700. The second largest increase occurred in **leisure and hospitality services** (+900 jobs) to 333,300. **Finance** and **professional and business services** each saw 500 additional jobs gained, increasing to 206,200 and 768,300 respectively.

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The largest job loss during May occurred in **government** with state government losing 2,500 jobs and federal and local government losing 600 and 500 jobs respectively. The second largest decrease occurred in **construction** which lost 1,600 jobs falling to 203,100. Other over-the-month decreases in employment included: **trade, transportation, and utilities** (-1,300) to 656,100; **information** (-1,000) to 64,700; **manufacturing** (-600) to 236,800; **miscellaneous services** (-400) to 180,000; and **mining** (-100) to 7,400.

Nonfarm Employment in Virginia* Seasonally Adjusted

Industry	Employment			April 2021 to May 2021		May 2020 to May 2021	
	May 2021	April 2021	May 2020	Change	% Change	Change	% Change
Total Nonfarm	3,888,500	3,892,000	3,633,200	-3,500	-0.1%	255,300	7.0%
Total Private Sector	3,190,600	3,190,500	2,933,700	100	0.0%	256,900	8.8%
Goods-Producing	447,300	449,600	427,200	-2,300	-0.5%	20,100	4.7%
Mining	7,400	7,500	6,900	-100	-1.3%	500	7.2%
Construction	203,100	204,700	197,700	-1,600	-0.8%	5,400	2.7%
Manufacturing	236,800	237,400	222,600	-600	-0.3%	14,200	6.4%
Service-Providing	3,441,200	3,442,400	3,206,000	-1,200	0.0%	235,200	7.3%
Private Service-Providing	2,743,300	2,740,900	2,506,500	2,400	0.1%	236,800	9.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	656,100	657,400	596,300	-1,300	-0.2%	59,800	10.0%
Information	64,700	65,700	63,800	-1,000	-1.5%	900	1.4%
Finance	206,200	205,700	207,600	500	0.2%	-1,400	-0.7%
Professional and Business Services	768,300	767,800	742,800	500	0.1%	25,500	3.4%
Education and Health Services	534,700	531,500	503,200	3,200	0.6%	31,500	6.3%
Leisure and Hospitality Services	333,300	332,400	228,700	900	0.3%	104,600	45.7%
Miscellaneous Services	180,000	180,400	164,100	-400	-0.2%	15,900	9.7%
Government	697,900	701,500	699,500	-3,600	-0.5%	-1,600	-0.2%
Federal Government	186,500	187,100	185,000	-600	-0.3%	1,500	0.8%
State Government	151,300	153,800	155,900	-2,500	-1.6%	-4,600	-3.0%
Local Government	360,100	360,600	358,600	-500	-0.1%	1,500	0.4%

*Current month's estimates are preliminary.

From May 2020 to May 2021, the VEC estimates that establishments in Virginia gained 255,300 jobs, an increase of 7.0%. In May, the private sector recorded an over-the-year gain of 256,900 jobs, while employment in the public sector lost 1,600 jobs.

Compared to a year ago, on a **seasonally adjusted** basis, all but two of the eleven major industry divisions experienced employment increases. The largest over-the-year job gain occurred in **leisure and hospitality**, up 104,600 jobs (45.7%). The next largest over-the-year job gain occurred in **trade, transportation and utilities**, up 59,800 jobs (10.0%). **Education and health services** was next with

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31,500 jobs (6.3%) gained over-the-year. The fourth largest over-the-year gain occurred in **professional and business services** which increased by 25,500 jobs (3.4%). Other gains were in **miscellaneous services**, up 15,900 jobs (9.7%); **manufacturing**, up 14,200 jobs (6.4%); **construction**, up 5,400 jobs (2.7%); **information**, up 900 jobs (1.4%); and **mining**, up 500 jobs (7.2%). The biggest over-the-year job loss occurred in **government**, with an overall loss of 1,600 jobs (-0.2%). There were increases in both federal and local governments, each gaining 1,500 jobs over-the-year. State government, however, saw a decrease of 4,600 jobs over the same time period. The only other industry to see an over-the-year job loss was finance with a loss of 1,400 jobs (-0.7%).

Total Nonfarm Employment in Virginia* Seasonally Adjusted

Area	Employment			April 2021 to May 2021		May 2020 to May 2021	
	May 2021	April 2021	May 2021	Change	% Change	Change	% Change
Virginia	3,888,500	3,892,000	3,633,200	-3,500	-0.1%	255,300	7.0%
Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford MSA	75,700	75,900	69,800	-200	-0.3%	5,900	8.5%
Charlottesville MSA	111,400	111,800	105,100	-400	-0.4%	6,300	6.0%
Harrisonburg MSA	67,600	67,500	61,800	100	0.1%	5,800	9.4%
Lynchburg MSA	99,200	99,200	95,400	0	0.0%	3,800	4.0%
Northern Virginia MSA	1,467,500	1,465,500	1,360,900	2,000	0.1%	106,600	7.8%
Richmond MSA	644,900	647,200	617,300	-2,300	-0.4%	27,600	4.5%
Roanoke MSA	157,600	157,500	145,000	100	0.1%	12,600	8.7%
Staunton-Waynesboro MSA	50,900	50,900	47,000	0	0.0%	3,900	8.3%
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, Virginia/North Carolina MSA	758,800	761,100	708,000	-2,300	-0.3%	50,800	7.2%
Winchester, Virginia/West Virginia MSA	66,800	66,800	61,400	0	0.0%	5,400	8.8%

*Current month's estimates are preliminary.

Seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment data is produced for ten metropolitan areas. In May, three metropolitan areas experienced over-the-month job gains, four experienced losses over-the-month, and three experienced no over-the-month change. The largest job gain occurred in Northern Virginia which added 2,000 jobs over-the-month. The next largest increase occurred in Harrisonburg and Roanoke, each gaining 100 jobs. The largest over-the-month job losses occurred in Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News and Richmond (-2,300 jobs). The other metropolitan areas that saw over-the-month job losses were Charlottesville (-400 jobs) and Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford (-200 jobs). Lynchburg, Staunton-Waynesboro, and Winchester all recorded no over-the-month changes in employment.

Over-the-year, **seasonally adjusted** total nonfarm employment increased in all ten metropolitan areas. The Northern Virginia metropolitan area experienced the largest absolute job gain, up 106,600 jobs (7.8%). Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News ranked second with an increase of 50,800 jobs (7.2%).

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Richmond ranked third, with a gain of 27,600 jobs (4.5%). Other over-the-year job gains occurred in Roanoke (12,600), Charlottesville (6,300 jobs), Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford (5,900 jobs), Harrisonburg (5,800 jobs), Winchester (5,400 jobs), Staunton-Waynesboro (3,900 jobs), and Lynchburg (3,800 jobs).

NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED DATA

Virginia's **unadjusted** unemployment rate rose by 0.2 percentage points in May to 4.1 percent, down 4.5 percentage points from a year ago. Compared to a year ago, the number of unemployed decreased by 193,502, household employment increased by 168,443, and the labor force decreased by 25,059. Virginia's not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate continues to be below the national unadjusted rate, which fell by 0.2 percentage points in May to 5.5 percent.

Compared to last month, the May unadjusted workweek for Virginia's 157,200 manufacturing production workers increased by 0.3 hours to 42.1 hours. Average hourly earnings of private-sector production workers increased by \$.21 to \$21.05 in May and average weekly earnings increased \$15.10 to \$886.21.

Technical note: Estimates of unemployment and industry employment levels are obtained from two separate monthly surveys. Resident employment and unemployment data are mainly derived from the Virginia portion of the national Current Population Survey (CPS), a household survey conducted each month by the U.S. Census Bureau under contract with BLS, which provides input to the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program (often referred to as the "household" survey). Industry employment data is mainly derived from the Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey, a monthly survey of approximately 18,000 Virginia businesses conducted by BLS, which provides estimates of employment, hours, and earnings data broken down by industry for the nation as a whole, all states and most major metropolitan areas (often referred to as the "establishment" survey). Both industry and household estimates are revised each month based on additional information from updated survey reports compiled by the BLS. **For national figures and information on how COVID-19 affected collection of the BLS establishment and household surveys in May, refer to the BLS [May 2021 Employment Situation](#) press release for details.**

The statistical reference week for the household survey this month was the week of May 9-15, 2021.

The Virginia Employment Commission plans to release the May local area unemployment rates on Wednesday, June 30, 2021. The data will be available on our website www.VirginiaWorks.com. The June statewide unemployment rate and employment data for both the state and metropolitan areas are scheduled to be released on Friday, July 16, 2021.